

MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE PATIENT AT A TIME

Hoyer® Cures a Fear of Lifts **A Story of Safety and Security for Former Ms. Wheelchair USA**

“My accident has molded me into the person I was meant to be,” said Tasha Schuh, former Ms. Wheelchair USA (2012-13). Tasha is a C-5 quadriplegic who experienced a life-altering accident at the young age of sixteen. Just days before opening night of her school play, *The Wizard of Oz*, she took one step backwards and fell sixteen feet through a trap door that had been opened only seconds earlier. She landed on the concrete floor of the historic Sheldon Theatre, breaking her neck, crushing her spinal cord, and fracturing her skull. After that day, Nov. 11, 1997, Tasha’s life was never the same.

Tasha never imagined accomplishing all that she has since her accident. She found her silver lining through the struggles of her journey and has used her experience to motivate others. She travels the country as an inspirational speaker sharing her story and encouraging people to overcome their own life challenges. Tasha is a shining symbol of hope and strength.

As winner of the National Rehabilitation Champion Award, which she received through nomination from the Mayo Clinic, she continues to maintain a positive outlook on life. She has twice been recognized by the Wisconsin State Legislature and has received the Young Distinguished Alumni Award from Winona State University. Tasha is also a hand-picked member of the national-traveling speaking team of Renee Rongen and Associates and is a professional member of the National Speakers Association.



Pictured: Tasha Schuh, Ms. Wheelchair USA (2012-13)

SOLUTION

It was during one of her speaking engagements at a premier post-acute healthcare provider meeting that Joerns RecoverCare first learned that Tasha uses a Hoyer lift. After the meeting, an associate contacted Grant Montgomery, Director of Patient Handling at Joerns RecoverCare. Grant was informed that Tasha had been using an outdated, hand-crank Hoyer lift for the past several years. So he quickly contacted Tasha's husband, Doug, and decided to surprise her with a brand new Hoyer Advance lift, an electronic lift. When Tasha realized she was going to receive this complimentary, upgraded lift, she was ecstatic! "This new Hoyer lift has made a huge difference for me and my caregivers," said Tasha. "One of my caregivers has arthritis and a bad back. With my scoliosis, I have to have a custom back rest, and this new lift and sling makes it so much easier to get it behind me so I can be more comfortable."

During the first thirteen years after Tasha's accident, she didn't use a lift at all. She used sliding boards when being transferred. But the sliding board pinched her skin twice, and she had to spend months in the hospital recovering. Tasha was afraid to make the switch to using a lift. "I'm paralyzed from the chest down, so not knowing if a sling was on right combined with my fear of falling made it difficult for me to transition to using lifts," said Tasha. "But I have embraced the change—and I am so glad I did!"

Grant held a training session with Tasha, her husband and her caregivers at her home to show them all how to properly use the lift and answer any questions. "Grant made the transition from a hand-crank lift to electronic so easy!" exclaimed Tasha. "I feel safer and more secure. The electronic lift turns a lot easier and smoother. I was scared in the beginning to use lifts, but now realize that in the long-run it's better because I have healthier and stronger skin."

Tasha spends a majority of her time traveling and speaking professionally around the country to conferences, churches, youth groups, organizations, schools, and women's events. But in her downtime, she enjoys being with family, friends and her husband in Ellsworth, WI. "Receiving this new Hoyer lift means so much," said Tasha. "It wasn't just me that benefited, it was my whole team. It makes things so much easier, especially when my husband is using it to get me situated for one of our movie nights or to put me to bed."

Tasha and her husband were thankful for the generosity that Joerns RecoverCare showed them that day in providing them with a new, electronic Hoyer Advance lift. "I know there's a lot of bad in the world," said Tasha. "But there is good too, and this is a prime example."